

by Alex Wollod

I am wholeheartedly in favor of the document entitled "Toward Political Realignment in America - A Socialist Declaration" adopted at our 1960 convention. Unfortunately, the manner in which the convention recorded itself in favor of this turn remains much to be desired. The February issue of "Hammer and Tongs" carried a statement entitled "Toward Political Realignment" which I presume was discussed by our locals. This statement despite any of its shortcomings was a resolution which could be debated prior to the convention and amended, and then be voted on at the convention. The delegates at the convention were confronted not with this statement, but with a statement which they had not read, let alone not having debated it, and essentially a public relations statement and which could for all practical purposes not be amended. As a public statement of the views of our organization, it is more than adequate. The delegates, however, should have had before them either the statement in the February issue of "Hammer and Tongs" or another resolution which the comrades should have had an opportunity to discuss prior to the convention. The statement "Toward Political Realignment - A Socialist Declaration" adopted by the convention should have been adopted by the National Committee or a subcommittee of the National Committee after the convention recorded itself in favor of the realignment concept as embodied in the type of statement or resolution carried in the February issue of "Hammer and Tongs". If this procedure would have been followed, I'm convinced that the "statement to Party locals" would either have not been carried or perhaps would not have been introduced in the first place. The debate would certainly have been more meaningful. The majority of the delegates who voted for the "statement to Party locals" were not happy with it, disagreed with it in part, but voted for it because they did not have a resolution before them in the sense I have tried to outline. The majority of the comrades wanted to record themselves in favor of maintaining a balance between work in the Democratic Party, and the independence of the Party structure, etc. The sponsors of the "statement to Party locals" are in another category. They are riding two horses. It is extremely important to them that they be classified as left wing. In order to accomplish this, one reads the following from their statement: "We maintain that a Labor Party perspective is not outmoded, as some believe, but on the contrary has been proved to be a REAL factor in American political life by the recent proposals for independent political action, coming from some unions that are fed up with the treachery of liberal politicians in the Democratic Party."

If these comrades are serious in their belief that the Labor Party is a real factor in the U.S. in 1960??? then obviously the main conclusion of the Realignment resolution should be from their viewpoint "break with the two capitalist parties and form a third party - A Labor Party. But this is not the conclusion of the Realignment resolution and correctly so. How anyone in this day and age can state that the L.P. is a real factor because in some rare instance a union leader makes a speech in favor of independent political action is beyond me. This does not mean that it is impossible for the situation to change. But I'm a square. I thought long ago that we wrote resolutions on the basis of existing circumstances and not on wishful thinking or in propping up the images we have of ourselves as left-wingers. If the sponsors of this point of view want to be taken seriously, let them document this "Labor Party is a real factor now" bit. They have plenty of time to do so.

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A PEACE PROGRAM FOR SOCIALISTS

by Martin Oppenheimer

As socialists, I think we must deny the proposition that East and West can coexist peacefully for any length of time with their present systems. There may be deals over this or that to prolong the agony, but clashes over one area or another remain inevitable given the natures of the two social systems concerned. Thus it follows that real negotiations, i.e., those that solve problems in terms of mutual withdrawal and permanent avoidance of conflict in various areas are impossible for the military-industrial complexes which rule, in various forms, in this country and in the Soviet Union. Only a socialist-oriented, or labor government, one which is truly free to make concessions permanently without waiting for the next opportune moment in which to stab the back of the opponent, can engage in real, problem-solving negotiations. Socialists ought to say this, if it is true, and not simply support negotiations.

But this is not to say that socialists ought not to favor negotiations at all. They gain us time on the one hand to build a peace movement (one which ultimately will have to face the deeper problems), and on the other the movement for negotiations helps to counter the pro-war tendencies of other sectors of our society in terms of pressures. For the military, the preparations going on (including civil defense) preclude real negotiations since they aim at forcing the enemy to retreat, and not at solving problems. The movement against all forms of militarization, whether it be against civil defense or for negotiations, is a counterweight to the Pentagon and the Right, and hence must be supported by socialists.

Bi-lateral, inspected, negotiated disarmament and military withdrawal (along Rapacki's lines) seems to me a good slogan in this country. But alone it is a dead-end since pressures must be built to force this kind of negotiation in the first place. On the one hand it must be combined with specific proposals for unilateral initiatives which this country could take without becoming "weaker," and on the other hand we must give strongest support to direct action against all the measures being taken towards the further militarization of the country (ROTC, the draft, Polaris, civil defense, etc.) in order to create a movement, in the broadest sense, for peace. Popular demands for specific kinds of unilateral initiatives, and against militarization measures, could help create the pressures for negotiation. In the long run such a movement (for negotiation, for unilateral initiatives, against continued militarization) will be forced to examine the deeper issues of the economy, social power, etc., and will be forced to become radical by the very nature of the status quo. The Establishment will aid in this examination by the nature of its opposition to such a movement, and by its efforts to throttle it.

What socialists should advocate, then, is the creation of a broadly radical peace movement, one that will be strong enough to force concessions from the Establishment, hence a politicized peace movement. To assist in the creation of this, one of the socialist's chief tasks is to form a bridge between the present peace groups and other social forces which could be part of such a movement in the future; specifically this means the labor movement and the civil rights movement. Neither has at present a significant interest in the area of peace. In both cases only a minority will at first be attracted to this very controversial issue. But it must be our job to work with this minority (examples: people around Reuther, Mazey; people around Rev. Jas. Lawson) so that they can influence the majority of their movements, and strengthen, by their presence, the weak peace movement of the present.

An American peace movement, to be radical, that is, to grapple with the real

problems and come up with real solutions, must be free to criticize and attack both major power blocs. Forces within the peace movement which cannot do this, which by their presence inhibit or prohibit such discussion, must be worked with at times, but must under no circumstances be permitted to attain significant control of the peace movement or of the groups within it. This means on the one hand the pro-peace forces which regard Kennedy's program as one within the context of which a peace movement can be forged (hence, they preclude mass action against the militarization of the U.S.); and on the other, pro-Communist elements whose chief if not only criterion for unity is that Communism be not an issue. But both kinds of forces, by inhibiting realistic appraisals of such issues as colonialism, democracy, Russia's expansionism, etc., weaken and cripple the real growth of a peace movement, even though temporarily such views may gain numbers of recruits. Such a peace movement, founded on such a lack of real program, is built on sand, and is doomed in advance to ineffective petitions, and superficial analyses.

The peace movement as it exists today in this country is profoundly un- or anti-political. It is oriented on the one hand to fervent pleas to the ruling elite, and on the other to a kind of narodnik, nonviolent terrorism equally lacking in communicative methods as far as building a movement is concerned. Socialists should therefore try to move the former elements away from well-intentioned polite appeals toward the creation of mass pressure which will make those appeals mean something; hence, towards concern for direct action. And socialists should try to move the latter elements towards those kinds of direct action methods which have political (rather than simply existential) value in this country. Two specific approaches may help in this: (a) Socialists should try to raise the issue of running "peace candidates," regardless of party label, in elections and primaries. We should not preclude any form in which this may take place, nor ask for perfection in program so long as it is a program which is clearly able to criticize both power blocs. (b) Socialists should attempt to push, within peace groups, for the general idea of an adult version of Student Peace Union, that is, a peace organization which combines political pressures with direct action, and is democratic, conditions which Sane and the peace sects do not fulfill.

In some geographical areas the first steps in this direction may be to support the idea of Peace Centers, and "Turn Towards Peace," hence creating the image of a movement rather than a bunch of disunited sects. In other areas it may be possible to struggle for such a course within Sane, or among sections of Sane. The present situation of the peace groups is frankly intolerable, and socialists should be prepared to say so. Better by far if the adherents of Kennedy and Khrushchov (in some cases overlapping) leave the peace movement and permit it realistic growth and real discussion, and real positive building.

Given the fact that there is as yet no real adult peace movement in this country, it may be necessary for a while to emphasize the building of a youth group such as Student Peace Union, and to attempt to get peace groups to cooperate in its support.

Socialists, while supporting, in general, all efforts aimed at weakening the role of the military-industrial complex in our society, and slowing the trend towards war, should not just give uncritical support for the sake of securing a few allies. Socialists should not "buy" slogans aimed at the broadest possible support if this means an evasion of real issues and a postponement of grappling with fundamental problems. Socialists should attack the basic assumptions of the military establishment first because this is right, and second because this is how we distinguish ourselves from liberals and pro-communist elements who, because they often fail to attack the basic assumptions, aid in the promotion of

illusions about the possibilities of peace within the present social context. Such criticism on our part is a harder task than to fall in with the broad slogans, but it is the only way toward the creation of a radical peace movement, one which can deal realistically with the problems of negotiation, unilateral initiatives, reconstruction for a peacetime economy, etc. As socialist we cannot be satisfied with less.

Finally a socialist line on the peace issue must be a radical line. Only a radical line can at present appeal to the youth, and to other elements who are beginning to look for a way out of the present nuclear impasse and its horrifying dangers to mankind. The Socialist Party can make itself a part of the peace movement once again only by participating in it, which essentially means a radical break with the status quo. Advocacy of mass direct action against the military establishment, for example, would confront the Establishment directly, and could conceivably alienate some of the liberal-labor bureaucracy which considers itself part of the current Establishment. But the job of socialists is to criticize contemporary society in such a manner as to get people to break with the status quo, not adjust to it. Only by a radical critique, and through radical demands, can socialism become a real force again, and in the context of the peace movement become meaningful, become a focus of political activity for such a peace movement. At this point in history it can indeed be said that he who hesitates about a radical approach to peace is lost--and so may be the rest of us.

Many individuals working in peace groups are now, or may soon become, members of the Socialist Party. But many of these are socialists by coincidence, as it were, and their primary interest continues to be the peace movement or pacifism. This situation should be changed. The SP should have a permanent national peace committee, as well as peace committees in locals, for the purpose of coordinating peace work, and for the even more important purpose of giving specific socialist content and direction to such work. A regular bulletin to socialist peace workers might be of great aid in this. The present situation of Party members working simply as individuals, often at cross-purposes, and often without any real direction to their work, must be changed. Regular regional conference of Party peace workers should also be considered.

Our time -- mankind's time -- may be limited. We must begin work in earnest now, not in the future, months from now or years from now. We have an unprecedented opportunity to say things about peace that nonsocialists cannot say. Our press should say them, and we must go about beginning to implement them. This means we must get into the peace movement, such as it is, and work. Right now.

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Resolution on Labor -- James Kennedy, local Chicago

As Socialists, we reaffirm our support of Organized Labor in its struggles on behalf of the American worker and our belief in it as the greatest single mass basis for democratic social change in America. And we do not hesitate to condemn the unjust attacks, legislative, business inspired, and otherwise, that are being directed against the Labor movement. None-the-less, we view with deep concern and sorrow Labor's continued internal divisions; its lack of real organizing drives; its failure to combat racism within its own ranks; and its continued subservience to false friends, the Democratic Party and the New Frontier.

We deplore the continued exclusion of the 1,700,000 trade unionists in the International Brotherhood of Teamsters from the House of Labor, the AFL-CIO; while at the same time we cannot help having some misgivings about the bureaucratic structure of the Teamsters and about the activities of various IBT officials. We support those many rank and file teamsters struggling to reform and democratize their union; yet we do not believe their continued exile from the AFL-CIO is of benefit to the IBT and its democratization, nor to the labor movement and its strength as a whole.

We support the call of the Industrial Union Department of the AFL-CIO, and of its president, Walter Reuther, for a major organizing drive -- especially among Negro workers, farm workers, white collar workers and throughout the South. And we also urge with the IUD that Labor use its new and improved machinery to settle internal disputes swiftly and do all in its power to cement its unity -- which has been far too long nothing but a facade.

We also demand that the House of Labor immediately take effective action to end discrimination and segregation in all its affiliates, their Internationals and locals, especially in the building and construction trade unions.

We restate our determination to defend the right of union staff members and employees to organize, bargain collectively, and strike.

We also heartily endorse the demand of Michael Quill, International President of the Transport Workers Union, at the national convention of the TWU, and the resolution offered by Comrade A. Philip Randolph, International President of the Brotherhood of Sleeping-Car Porters, at the AFL-CIO convention in December, 1961, for the formation of a national Labor Party free and independent of the old major parties, a new party truly committed to the interests of the American working people. We regret that the leaders of Labor once again failed to heed this call, delayed genuine political realignment, and continued their subservience to the old parties who have promised so much and have given Labor so little.

As to the specific demands in this arena, we American Socialists go on record as urging the following actions:

We ask for immediate action to cover some 16,000,000 American workers, still unprotected, with the minimum wage law. In particular, workers in the hotel, hospital, laundry, and restaurant industries, farm workers, and workers in the food-processing industries must receive priority. We call for immediate steps to raise the minimum wage beyond the end of the current progression (\$1.25/hour) to a new high of \$1.50 per hour. We ask that minimum wage laws be enacted in the 50 states and territories to provide a wage of \$1.25 per hour. With the AFL-CIO we ask an end to wage differential advantages enjoyed by employers in Puerto Rico and other territories of the United States.

We ask for Federal legislation to reduce the maximum hours to 30 hours a week, and perhaps even lower, with no reduction in pay. We

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support the drastic extension in length of paid vacations and paid holidays and other leaves of absence, as well as other time reduction proposals, as a partial remedy to unemployment and automation.

We demand the repeal of the 'Right to Work' laws and the repeal of Section 14 (b) of the Taft-Hartley Act. We urge that, following the repeal of this section, Congress amend the Taft-Hartley Act as follows: "That in all States and territories, labor organizations may enter into collective bargaining arrangements and agreements which bind employers to apply and execute provisions that require all employees to become, within 31 days of hiring and/or enactment of said collective bargaining agreement, members of the labor organization and remain members in good standing as condition of employment during the life of said agreement, anything in the Constitutions and laws of any State or Territory to the contrary notwithstanding."

We also join with the AFL-CIO in condemning the McClellan Senate Bill 2631 as a direct threat to a democratic labor movement and a violation of basic workers' rights -- we challenge Congressional liberals to prove their worth by standing firm to defeat it. We are opposed to all limitations on the right to strike and to compulsory arbitration.

We further oppose the continued bonding of union officers and employees.

We demand the immediate repeal of all the anti-labor provisions in the Taft-Hartley and Kennedy-Landrum-Griffin Acts.

We demand swift legislation to restore worker and trade unionist rights denied under repressive legislation: the right to organize and strike for government workers and workers in so-called defense industries; the right to refuse -- in contracts -- to handle struck and non-union-made goods, and to forbid an employer to use under any conditions non-union labor; the right to full and free trade union boycott actions in all forms, including secondary boycotts; the right to situs, organizational, recognition picketing, and all other forms of picketing; the right of a union to take any economic action it deems justified against management after due notice; the right to engage in full unimpaired organizing campaigns everywhere in our land.

We call for legislation that will, in a legitimate strike, prevent an employer from hiring non-union labor, and force him to continue payment of wages to the striking workers, or at least guarantee them workers compensation. We likewise call for Federal legislation that will forbid any and all forms of segregation at every level of trade union organization with heavy penalties and fines provided for.

We call for an end to the anti-civil libertarian provisions of the Labor Management Act; and that the measures taken against various trade unions and labor officials, which violate civil and political liberties, be dropped. We urge trade unions to progressively restrict and limit management rights and press for genuine worker participation in management and ownership, for real co-determination in industry and business, and not simply settle for profit-sharing schemes. We urge adoption of legislation to facilitate this end.

The Socialist Party-Social Democratic Federation pleads with Labor to straighten out its own house and to adopt positive and dynamic programs to obtain workers' rights. We call on the American worker to join us in this appeal and to support our demands. As the political heirs of America's greatest Labor Leader, Eugene V. Debs, we remind the American workingman that Debs' own Party is his natural political home, and that with his trade union, our Party is his genuine comrade-in-arms. We appeal to him to join us in the socialist movement, not only to obtain these elemental demands, but beyond them to build a Party of Labor with a socialist program committed to his interests whereby he can work for his full liberation and the creation of a new world in which no man will be the tool of another.

Draft Resolution on Civil Defense - Saul Mendelson

Referred by National Committee for discussion to National Action Committee and to Preconvention Resolutions Committee

The SP-SDF opposes the current Administration shelter program. We have previously gone on record as favoring substantial unilateral initiatives by the United States aimed at reversing the present arms race. The effectiveness of any shelter program depends not only on its own size but on the size and strength of the weapons developed by Russia. Hence a massive shelter program is merely another step in the escalation of the arms race. There is no fundamental difference in net effect between increasing the strength, number and deliverability of nuclear weapons, increasing civil defense or increasing the strength and effectiveness of anti-missile weapons. All together make up the present balance of terror. An expanded shelter program is therefore incompatible with a policy of unilateral initiatives toward disarmament.

In addition, an expanded shelter program, if put forward seriously on a magnitude that would make it a substantial contribution to civilian safety at least at the current level of nuclear strength of Russia, would also raise an important problem of social priorities. Given the fact that any shelter program that was conceivably not a mere delusion would be many times the size of the current Administration bill, we must point out that by rejecting civil defense as in conflict with initiatives toward disarmament, we are thereby at the same time making more viable any pressure for greatly increased Federal programs in furtherance of education, health and welfare.

By rejecting the shelter program we are at the same time committing ourselves to oppose the use of an illusory civil defense program for creating a false sense of security among the American people and for perpetuating a war psychology. We do not wish to foster a belief that there is any possible substitute for disarmament as a basis for security in today's world.

We have been asked by numerous people: "But where do you stand?" "It's not clear from the 'Mendelson-Meier, etc.' document whether you are for or against realignment, whether you simply want a compromise, or what?" This is an attempt to try and clarify what I see as the purpose of the resolution. Whether it is sufficiently clearly enunciated by the document itself is, of course, up to you to decide. If you agree with my rather discursive argumentation, you are welcome to rewrite or amend the document in keeping with this spirit.

--Deborah Meier
Chicago

I favor the Party being clearly (as in the last convention) on record in favor of all developments leading toward or attempting to create a political realignment of forces in America and the creation of a more meaningful two-party system. The struggle for such a development within the Democratic Party, which breaks out here and there, now and again, is important for Socialists not only to watch but in some circumstances wholeheartedly to support. This is true because the struggles themselves are a potentially radicalizing force and because their goal is of sufficient merit. Were realignment to occur --even were it to occur within the context of more or less present day circumstances (certainly unlikely) -- it would create a much higher and more clarified political climate and debate in this country, to the benefit of the socialist and labor movements!

However, I do not see the position crudely stated above as crucial to the Party's growth, activity, and meaning today. Neither the state of the Party nor the extent to which realignment efforts are being decisively waged warrants any special priority. Where locals, branches, or state organizations see situations arising where strategic questions -- such as support for this or that Democratic candidate, or other possible electoral actions by its members and organization -- seem relevant, they should be free to do so within this context. They may, on the basis of this general perspective, choose to support Democratic candidates in primaries or in elections; they are free to decide that pressure toward realignment and the creation of a liberal alliance are best served by running independent candidates or, in rare instances, running an SP campaign. Similarly they may feel that no possible Party position will either help or hinder realignment (a likely circumstance) and that no Party stand is required. Or they may determine that the Party is too divided to make a Party position locally of much use, or that its members, regardless of views, are not prepared to

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participate in ANY electoral activity and that Party efforts are best suited to other activities, even during election year.

Thus it is true, that the simple taking of a stand in favor of the general slogan of realignment in no way solves the problem of determining the Party's strategy -- when to do what with respect to running candidates of its own, supporting Democratic candidates, or agitating for independent Labor candidates. It gives some "clues", some guidelines.

It clearly differentiates the Party from the position that Socialist electoral activity should be attempted wherever possible, regardless of its effect on local realignment efforts or regardless of our relationship to other liberal and left forces, as an educational and agitational technique to build the Party. It differentiates the Party from the position that support to bourgeois candidates or Parties is a capitulation to capitalism, leading inevitably to dissolution, and is thus impermissible. It differentiates the Party from the position which sees as the only proper response to the plea, "but who SHOULD we support and vote for?", Build a Labor Party. It does more, in other words, in a negative way than it does in a positive. It defends a direction, and gives great permissibility on day to day problems.

The attempt, however, to develop any more of a detailed guide to Party policymakers has several dangers: (1) it leads to generalizations and abstractions and predictions in the absence of detailed and accurate information; (2) it assumes the Party is anywhere capable of "mobilizing" all its members for any particular activity, thus making meaningful any strategy not supported, understood, and amicable to the specific local comrades able to carry them out; (3) it assumes that realignment developments are in a critical stage and that we can by our intervention play a key role in furthering the process; (4) it divides the Party unnecessarily -- dividing not merely pro- and anti-realignment supporters, but still further, one type of realignment supporter from another; (5) and this is especially unnecessary, since this question is NOT the crucial one for the Party, and our role in this area will not be the determining one for the Party's ability to sustain itself at worst and to grow modestly at best in the next two-year period.

It is this last question (5) which lies at the heart of my argument and which the Mendelson-Meier document is primarily aimed at defending. This proposition can be approached from several angles.

(1) The present dispute, posed as it is: electoral actionists, labor partyites, realignmentites, etc. obscure the actual or potential relationships between members of the Party. Here in Chicago, for example, in both the peace and civil rights arenas -- where primary Party and YPSL activity takes place -- supporters of all three positions find a remarkable degree of similarity in their attitudes. This is remarkable because their approach to both problems is not simply that of being "for" peace and "for" racial equality. They approach the complex problems of building a peace movement and building a civil rights movement in a way not so commonly found among liberals, unfiliated "radicals," or various pro-Soviet leftist types. Certainly, while differences might be found which separate these groups along factional lines even in these arenas, the differences are noticeable only to the trained sectarian eye looking for symptoms of "inevitable tendencies" in the behavior of "potential" deviationists.

(2) Among the people the Party and YPSL have recruited, their

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position on electoral action bears little relationship to their ability, their community standing, their competence to deal with liberal organizations, or any personality "sectarianism." There are "nuts" in all tendencies, despite the implication hinted at, none too subtly by the staunchest realignmentites, that they hold a monopoly on mental sanity and emotional maturity.

(3) It appears to me unlikely that a change in our position -- that is even greater singleminded attention by our press and leadership to realignment -- would attract any new body of persons. There may well be some who would think we were now at last more sensible. But if this were at the cost of our activity in other areas, even it becomes questionable. For what will justify our existence in the eyes of friendly non-members is not the extent to which we say the same thing they do about this or that, but the extent to which we carve for ourselves a role that WE can best play as a distinct organizational entity and then play that role effectively.

(4) Where do we recruit from? What can we do to attract those who seek something that the liberal organizations (IVI, ADA, reform clubs) cannot give them? And how can we give it to them without asking them to sacrifice what these groups can give and we cannot? We can serve as a coordinating body, discussion center, clearing house and educational forum for those with similar views on certain decisive issues facing America today -- civil rights, foreign policy and peace, civil liberties, the labor movement, social planning, unemployment, etc. As well as sharing a common outlook on these questions, and a common interest in a democratic socialist alternative to them, we offer a place to work out, explore, study and discuss what lies behind these problems, what ties them together, what must eventually be done to resolve them. We can initiate new ideas and programs -- not by imposing our "line" or mobilizing our "forces," but by the extent to which we assist individual members in their functioning.

(5) A socialist movement hostile to a "sane nuclear policy," supporting civil defense, hostile to negotiations or foreign aid, would cut itself off from the radical, disillusioned student, or adult liberal who gravitates around the peace movement. A socialist movement which urged Negroes to be more patient and argued for moderation in civil rights, would cut itself off from all potential student socialist support and virtually all Negroes and adult radicals. A socialist movement which favored McCarthyite tactics, supported the Smith Act, or other anti-civil libertarian measures would lose all influence with those who might join a socialist organization. In these, and in fact, in many other even less important areas, the bulk of those among whom we can have influence -- and who might join us -- whether it be trade unionists, students, or alienated intellectuals -- rightfully expect from us certain clearcut positions. On political action--the likely perspectives for realignment, the potentialities for independent political action, the efficacy of running socialist candidates--the audience whom we address make no demands of us. They are often disinterested, or they are themselves divided; they do not clearly identify one position with all that is good and one with all that is bad. The Party is in a position to try and play an educational role and a clearing house function in this area, although there are other groups in a better position to play even this role. But the Party's demise or rise is not dependent on its being identified with any special approach to political action (beyond the requirement for flexibility, permissiveness and a friendliness toward realignment).

(6) Now, it is true that for SOME people who favor realignment all other activities, all intellectual endeavors, all recruitment of

new members, are seen in the light of the one question of realignment. For them, our prime task in the civil rights movement is to agitate or maneuver towards realignment. For them, tactics in the peace movement are determined by their effect on our relationship to internal struggles in the Democratic Party (or struggles which they think may arise). For them the question is not where we can recruit, but contempt for those who are recruited out of idealism and radical revolt, rather than seeing things their way. They see little purpose in our possible growth through civil rights, peace and student environments. While they differ in their estimates regarding recruitment possibilities within the reform Democratic movement or official trade union circles, they regard only SUCH recruits as of significance.

(7) I think they have failed to understand the minimal purpose of maintaining a socialist movement in a period where its decisions are all but impotent in effecting social change. It is not, alas, our task today to weld together the forces that can shape history. But we can take that magnificent quality of human idealism and radicalism -- which brought ALL of us without exception to the socialist movement -- and develop it, "politicalize" it, within the framework of serious mutual experience and discussion. Whether history will thank us for this job is for future generations to decide. Quite likely our present absolutely miniscular size will cause us to be unnoticed regardless of future trends, except by the careful historians of the period. But it is those who are aware of the impotence today of the so-called practical solutions who take the leap into identifying with us. No amount of pretense can or will eliminate this fact -- we represent a leap from respectable, "trusting" gradualistic liberalistic politicalism. We are not interested in sabotaging these "practical realists", but in doing what we can to help make their plans more realistic. One way to do this, however, is to continue to think through questions from our socialist viewpoint, continue to function in the issue-oriented arenas where this disillusionment and idealism first are joined together, and to educate, stimulate, and reformulate this cynical idealism into a possible political weapon.

(8) The extreme labor partyites and the extreme realignmentites both suffer from a heritage of sectarianism. They seek perfect finished programs where none is available. They seek a true socialist strategy which will affect the social forces of our epoch; they steadfastly refuse to face either the actual conditions of our miserably tiny Party or the actual flesh and blood problems in the organizations in which our few members do today participate. They lay out grand strategies (and here the so-called free from sectarianism realignmentites are often more guilty) for SP initiative in creating grass root, or top-level "new frontier" clubs, for SP strategy in reshaping the student peace movement, etc. without any regard for the facts of life. They see a slogan as the key to open the door of success.

(9) I think in the process of this argument over political action the existence of a majority which can see eye to eye on the immediate problems of the party and which CAN reach a compromise on those questions which the others consider all-decisive has been obscured. The purpose of the Mendelson-Meier document, then, is to seek to make explicit the reason why such a compromise is possible (that is, that the resolution of the question in dispute is less important than assumed) and to emphasize what our main task is.

There are, decidedly, situations in which participation in directly political-action type clubs is and can be of great importance to the Party -- assuming we have members willing to devote the energy to them.

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However, I seriously question whether one really has come to full grips with the problems of realignment here at all. In most such situations, i.e., the Despres campaign in Chicago, the Mark Lane club in New York, "realignment" is not the issue at stake, but the existence of vital, "radical"-type issues and campaigns. In a sense these activities are extensions or aspects of our "arena" work in civil rights, peace, etc. They attract many of the same people who normally gravitate toward SANE, CORE, NAACP, NALC, rather than the typical "Liberal" politician. Granted that a position and policy such as realignment is of use here, just as good an explanation for our participation lies in the fact that these campaigns are waged over issues we consider decisive and alive, and they have awakened interest and movement within the Left and leaning toward the Left. That is the obvious commonsense reason for our support, not fancy epochal plans for realignment. And our main contribution to them, I suspect, is not our peculiar political realignment conception, but our grasp of the kind of organizational and political issues (if we have it) that makes these clubs or campaigns more successful and our ability to clarify issues for many of those involved.

I want to add the following remarks because I think it would be well for some of us to stop a moment and see the last four years in clearer perspective. I urge comrades to reread an article by Benson and Gates in the March 25, 1957 issue of Labor Action (organ of the now defunct Independent Socialist League, which in 1958 merged with the SP-SDF)** These two comrades, now eager and adamant supporters of what I would call the extreme realignment wing, were discussing their reaction to the position on political action taken at the time of the merger of the SP and the SDF. They urged ISL comrades not to be alarmed. They pointed out that while it did leave the door open for individual SP members to support Democrats -- which they thought unwise of such members -- it was not necessarily all evil. For one thing, the SP-SDF merger document is strongly in favor of continued agitation for a Labor Party and focuses attention squarely on the need for such a party, independent of the existing bourgeois parties. Secondly, it is necessary, they say, in the weak and fragmented state of the socialist movement, to grant the greatest freedom and flexibility to all members so that even those naive and benighted comrades who favored supporting bourgeois candidates might join the fold, to be educated later by wiser heads into a greater grasp of the problems and the realities. They then outline their reasons for opposing support of the bourgeois parties and candidates in language reminiscent of any good current YPSL document. Thus four years ago these two comrades, who represented at the time not the "left wing" of the ISL but its least "sectarian" elements, took a position approximately that of the extreme Labor Party position as put forth today, although urging acceptance by ISLers of the idea of permissiveness on the part of the Party toward what individual members might do. The position of the SP-SDF taken at that time was considerably less "pro-realignment" than that now urged by either the Mendelson-Meier resolution or, of course, the Shachtman resolution. No one, to my knowledge, was then urging what now is the Shachtman resolution. A mere two years later the SP passed an ambiguous 2-headed policy at its national convention: it favored realignment in one document and carefully hedged it with a complex, rather sectarian implementation policy in another. Yet it clearly placed the Party on record and enabled the Party to give widespread publicity to a document and a position that was all but unheard of in at least two of the organizations which had only shortly before merged to form a new "umbrella" party -- heterogeneous and multi-tendency. Of course the convention continued the policy of permissiveness toward what individual members chose to do. During the

following two years several branches have been involved in Democratic Party electoral activity, New America has put forth clear and unambiguous support for realignment, etc.

In view of this rather remarkable situation one wonders at the anger, the vehemence and the frustration with which some realignment-ites react today, in particular some of them who, like Benson and Gates, have themselves so rapidly altered their own views. They speak as though weary from years of in-fighting against sectarianism.

Clearly the views of even the rabid YFSL Labor Partyites are not as crazy and sectarian as all that, when so many of us -- experienced, mature, intelligent socialists -- held such a view ourselves just a few short years ago. We have changed: bravo. And we have influenced the Party to make a similar change. But surely none of us has a right to such indignation against those who have changed less rapidly or who have not changed at all, or who have just joined the socialist movement. 1962 may not be 1958, but "objective" social conditions are not so unmistakably new, to say the least, as to make it incomprehensible to us why others fail to agree with us. Such a perspective, a looking backward, a mere $3\frac{1}{2}$ years later, might at least produce a modicum of humility on our part. And such a quality might go a long way toward helping to avoid a bitter and destructive Party fight in June.

Finally, let me say this: I think the problem we all face is terribly difficult. A repudiation of the present Party leadership would serve no function. Under difficult circumstances they have performed amazingly well, particularly the National Secretary and the New America editor. I do not intend to support any such repudiation. What failures the Party has had are not in any way their responsibility, nor are those failures due to their incorrect political analysis. In most respects I find their political "savvy" to be first rate, their general orientation very advantageous to the Party. I think in their emphasis on realignment as the key to the Party's problems they are grasping at straws. I think that in this respect they are mistaken. I am, however, genuinely unclear about how we can both avoid endorsing their mistake and also not tear apart what they have so excellently constructed. I think this is what all "tendencies" must consider in the few months ahead. We are not potent enough as a political movement to afford the unpleasantness which is threatening us in June, and which already grips so much of the organization. Some will stay around to fight it out to the bitter end. Most will vote with their feet. Factionalism, like bloodshed, draws a crowd. But it soon tires, bores, and disgusts most. And it is not always the least valuable who leaves first. When it finally erodes that sense of comradeship absolutely vital to a socialist organization, it has killed all chances of revival.

If we would enter this dispute with both greater respect for our recent political pasts, and paradoxically, greater awareness of the fallibility of our past rigidly held dogmas, we might survive this convention, if not in stronger shape, at least in one piece.

 **To better grasp the breathtaking extensiveness of this shift, see "New Perspectives for American Socialism: the case for unity," introduction by Max Shachtman, adopted by ISL Convention, July 1957. "The differences between those who would support bourgeois candidates...under certain conditions and those...who support only the candidates of the labor movement against the old party machines...will probably

persist until labor forms its own party and perhaps even after. A reunited movement must permit the cooperative coexistence of both these views within the framework of a single organization and provide suitable...forms for their living together without imposing the line of one upon the other. However, we feel that one of the primary tasks of a socialist organization is to clearly and unambiguously, as an organization, oppose support to the capitalist parties and its candidates and to dispel illusions about the possibility of working within, defending or reforming one or the other as the lesser evil."

See also Mike Harrington's "The Defense of Man," section on the Labor Party in Labor Action, March 24, 1958.

See also "A Discussion of Socialist Electoral Policy," in the last pamphlet issue of Labor Action, on Policies and Program of the ISL, issued May 19, 1958.

A TELEGRAM

To Deborah Meier,

3/23 4:30AM

Am deeply shocked and hurt at your dishonesty at signing my name to your document without my permission. All I ever indicated some five months ago was interest in it, nothing more. Since then I have even changed that opinion. Request immediate public apology.

George Rawick

Reply

George is mistaken. He told me ~~last~~ September that I could add his name. I am sure his mistake is an honest one.

Saul Mondelson

Statement of: State Committee, California SP-SDF

President Kennedy has announced the decision to resume atmospheric testing of nuclear weapons, and the world inches closer to destruction. Like the Soviet resumption of testing last fall, the U.S. decision is an offense against all of humanity. Radioactive fallout knows no national boundaries; it falls everywhere, and the tensions of the cold war are tightened up to a still higher pitch.

The Soviets' resumption of bomb testing increased the pollution of the atmosphere, accelerated the arms race and strengthened reactionary pressures in the United States by giving the ultra-Right and the proponents of U.S. Tests new ammunition. But that does not excuse the Kennedy administration, whose decision to resume testing is clearly its own responsibility.

The American decision to copy Russia in resuming the tests is desperately wrong. Both sides already have what is called an "overkill" capacity. We are told that this time the decision is different; that we will promise not to explode any more bombs in the atmosphere if the Russians will only sign the same treaty, slightly modified, which they have continually rejected. Everyone knows that the pressures on the Kennedy administration to resume testing have been increasing. The problem has been, for the administration, how to make these tests palatable to a dubious world opinion. The uncommitted nations know that our resumption will only guarantee that the Russians will launch a new test series, to "close the gap" again. How long can this race continue before radioactive fallout passes the "tolerable" level? And how much more tension can people stand before they begin to listen to the insane voice of the advocates of preventive war, the groups in both the United States and the Communist bloc who are ready to push the button and get it over with?

We of the Socialist Party are against bomb tests, East or West. But to say that is only a first step. What is the alternative to testing, on our side? Is it to let the Soviet Union and China win the cold war and the world? Is the only choice between being "Red" or "dead"? We believe that the choice is a false one, and is only advanced by those who can see no way out, and whose death instincts are very strong indeed.

The strangest argument for testing is that any major nuclear advance for one side invites war by making "victory" possible; hence, it is argues, equalization of "deterrent" ability is necessary for peace, even if it takes more bomb tests, and still more. But this only reveals that it is the cold war itself which must be ended. Even if tests are suspended again for a time, the danger of war would still be there. Tests must be stopped, but the real answer to the endless crises of the cold war is not to be found in simply opposing further testing. To break out of the circle of the arms race, a new politics is needed, the politics of democracy and of socialism.

As socialists, we do not support either the politics of the military-industrial complex of American capitalism, or those of the totalitarian Communist bloc. We are not appeasers or neutralists, but political opponents of both war camps. While there are important differences between the two systems, both the U.S. and Communist rulers are, in their own ways, enemies of freedom and democracy. Year after year, they have shown themselves to be alike in their common willingness to use armed force to crush any revolt against their domination. In Hungary, in Tibet, in Cuba, in Guatemala - both the U.S. and Communist blocs have used the same imperialist tactics. Korea, Laos, and Vietnam have been the battlegrounds of the two rival powers, and the peoples of those countries are the victims.

The interests of most of the peoples of the world are continually threatened by both systems. In Latin America, in Africa, in the Middle East, the revolutions against colonialism and native dictatorships are opposed by the United States and its NATO allies. The peoples of those countries do not want to substitute Soviet domination

for the old rulers, but the politics of the cold war and the absence of a positive social alternative to Soviet totalitarianism tend to push them into the Communist camp.

Peace cannot be won by changing the souls of the men who now run Moscow and Washington and Peiping. The call for peace, without a political alternative to the present systems, can only have temporary and limited successes; it can only act as a brake on the race toward war. We support such limited struggles, but stress the need to oppose the social systems at the root of the cold war.

In order to turn toward a lasting peace, we must begin by:

1. Opposing further bomb tests.
2. Calling for disarmament under effective controls.
3. Disengagement of both major powers in Europe.

How can these changes be brought about? A significant peace movement can only be built if it begins to mobilize the vast numbers of people who do not, ultimately, have a stake in the continuation of the cold war, even if they do not realize it now.

There is in the United States a vacuum on the left. Today, the Negro people and other minority groups, the labor movement, and independent liberals have no effective political voice for their aspirations. We believe that what this country needs, above all, is a genuine political opposition, independent of the bi-partisan "establishment" and the major party leaders who follow essentially the same foreign policy no matter who is in office.

A peace movement which is willing to mobilize these groups, to form a democratic opposition on the left, can do more than hold up bomb testing for a few months. It can build a new America; based on the real interests of labor, liberals, and minority groups, who now have no real voice in government. They help to elect a Democratic administration which has concentrated on a continued build-up of an economy based on multiplying armaments, while the problems of civil rights, housing, unemployment and medical care are shoved aside.

An alliance on the democratic left is the only force which can make the demand for peace effective, by planning for an economy of peace. The American economy today is geared toward war; we can only begin to disarm when labor, liberals, and minority groups find their own political voice and root out the entrenched leaders of the military-industrial establishment.

As such an opposition develops, the United States can begin to turn toward a democratic foreign policy, one which will provide a non-military road to defeating both colonialism and Communist expansion. Instead of supporting reactionary rulers with military aid, such an American policy for peace would support democratic revolutionary programs against poverty and dictatorship. Such a policy would have meant instituting aid to the Cuban revolution thus combating the authoritarian and Communist influence in the Castro regime, which are distorting that revolution into a dead end.

For the future, a foreign policy for peace requires that we make alliances with democratic forces everywhere - for example, in Germany with a social democratic movement which seeks an independent course, not with Adenauer and the ex-Nazis whom we now support.

The only way in which the peace movement can become fully effective is by becoming political. Those who want peace must be willing to oppose an administration which refuses their demands, and to make alliances with the social forces capable of building an alternative to the Establishment. They must be willing to consider the formation of a third party, like the New Democratic Party in Canada, if a meaningful realignment of the major parties in the United States proves impossible.

The time for a new political alliance for peace is now. The politics of peace demands a new America, not the America of Kennedy or Nixon.